

Karl Peterson, 124th TC, Cam Ranh Bay

From: Karl Peterson [email address removed]
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2005 10:39 PM
To: Richard.e.killblane@us.army.mil
Subject: Military training film

Dear Sir;

I was stationed at Cam Rahn Bay in 1969 when a group from Fort Eustis came to make a military training film. It involved MILSTAMP and the documentation following a container from the states to the eventual unit in Vietnam. As Cargo Accounting Officer for the II Corp area I was asked to be in the film picking up the manifest from the ship and also with showing how the documentation was processed.

Can you tell me if there is a film of this nature in existence and if it was ever finished and also if there is any way to view or get a copy of the same.

Thank you in advance;

Karl M Peterson
former Captain, TC

From: Karl Peterson [email address removed]
Sent: Wednesday, January 12, 2005 3:07 PM
To: Richard.e.killblane@us.army.mil
Subject: Re: Military training film

Richard;

Thank you for your response. I would estimate the film was made in the later part of 1969. It was made by an older gentleman who was a civilian instructor at my OCS class at Fort Eustis.

Duties in Vietnam: My tour started in Cam Rahn Bay with the 124th TC. I was the outport commander for shallow draft which entailed the loading and unloading of Shallow Draft such as LST, LCM, LCU and BDL. The beach was sandy and all was handled by rough terrain fork lifts.

Mid tour I was outport commander at Phan Thiet in support of the 101st. We unloaded the LCU's that came from Cam Rahn and moved the cargo to our camp which was near the beach and surrounded by water and/or cemetery. The beach was only secure during daylight hours.

My last half of the year was as the Cargo Accounting Officer in charge of all cargo coming into the II Corps area by water and air. We had a five dock facility which was

designated for general cargo at the first four while the fifth was segregated with distance for unloading more volatile cargo such as ammunitions and such.

Our office handled all of the manifests and transportation documents. We had subposts of Nha Trang, Phan Thiet and Phan Rang if my spelling is still accurate. I traveled to all three on a regular basis. Some by chopper and some by jeep.

As to the depot, I had a computer section there which at the time was "Greek" to me. I had a Lt that knew and took care of things. I don't remember a riot, but that doesn't mean it didn't happen when I was stationed at Phan Thiet.

That is an overview and I would be happy to answer anything else you might have.

Karl

From: Karl Peterson [email address removed]
Sent: Wednesday, January 12, 2005 3:18 PM
To: Richard.e.killblane@us.army.mil
Subject: Re: Military training film

As far as accomplishments I can only talk about my own personal experiences. It has been over 35 years ago and the memory goes.

During my tour, we established a school in my building to teach the Vietnamese to read and work with transportation documents. We uncovered a black market and major deficiencies in the reconciliation of cargo. The accountability went from 82% when I took command to over 96% when I left.

Next to our facility was a portable metal airstrip which was used for older prop planes and helicopters that would arrive by aircraft tenders. They would come wrapped in plastic much like a cocoon. They would be assembled and serviced at our little airstrip and flown to their destination.

We accommodated a small office for the Air Force consisting of 2 NCO's to handle that portion. My office had approximately 20-50 men. It's vague as to the actual number....35 years, remember.

Hope this helps.

Karl

From: Karl Peterson [email address removed]
Sent: Thursday, January 13, 2005 8:25 AM
To: Richard.e.killblane@us.army.mil
Subject: Re: Military training film

I arrived by commercial jet at Saigon. Left the same way. Served at Shallow draft for a few months, Phat Thiet a few and Cargo Acct Officer in Cam Rahn approx 6 months. The

unit was the Headquarters Company of the 124th Transportation Command. I arrived on Dec 17, 1968 and left on Dec 16, 1969.

Looking through an old file I found this short letter to my brother dated March 4th, 1969.

"Rod,

We were hit last night. 3 killed , one wounded. We received 40 + 140 mm Russian Rockets from across the bay and we expect more tonight. They hit us about 2300 hours last nite and I was at south beach. Lucky for us we didn't receive any fire at our area. We had 100 ton of ammo on an LST that had to wait for the tugs to unbeach. This meant it was there for about 15 minutes during the shelling.

A DC-3 flew over the area across the bay and dropped flares and fired over 50 to 100,000 rounds in about 15 minutes which almost covered the entire area. The ROK army fired artillery at the hill for the duration of the night

Karl"

As for the units at each subport, the portion I was controlling was from the 124th and our sole purpose was the paper trail on cargo from unloading to reaching it's final destination and the reconciliation of the paperwork.

A civilian group was at Nha Trang and Cam Rahn-AB & T (Alaska Barge and Tug) which handled the movement of cargo. It in turn was loaded on military vehicles that were driven by the members of the 124th.

My office the final 6 months was in Cam Rahn near the petroleum dock. This was shown in many of the early photos if you have any. As for Phan Rang and Phan Thiet these were handled solely by the military and it's vague to me if these too were with the 124th.

As far as support the subports and Cam Rahn handled the entire Two Corp area and I only know that they handled the areas in there proximity. Phan Thiet flew chopper runs in support of the 101st airborne to there firebases.

I wish I could give you more accurate data, but the years take a toll.

Continue to stay in touch....it's good for me to remember and if it helps with some of the history collecting...so be it.

Karl

From: Karl Peterson [email address removed]

Sent: Thursday, January 13, 2005 3:20 PM

To: Richard.e.killblane@us.army.mil

Subject: ReMore info on Nam

Other bits and pieces;

Dates from my letters show I was:

Dec 17-April 21, 1969-Shallow Draft Documentation Officer-Cam Rahn
April 21-the end of May sometime-Outport Commander at Phan Thiet
Remainder of time at Port Documentation as Cargo Acct Off in Cam Rahn

I had talked about the rocket attack. Another attack on the hospital happened on Aug 18 killing 2 and wounding 98. The hospital was at the Air Force side about 3 miles away. VC had thrown satchel charges into the various wards.

From another letter: When I was at the Shallow Draft we handled on average 55 ships per month, however these were the landing craft, barges and LST as previously mentioned.

Sorry about how I'm jumping around, but I hope this helps.

Karl

From: Karl Peterson [email address removed]
Sent: Thursday, January 13, 2005 3:07 PM
To: Richard.e.killblane@us.army.mil
Subject: Re: Military training film

Thanks for motivating me. Looking at some old letters and various items I had stored away on Nam I found some interesting info:

While at the main office in Cam Rahn we handled 60 ships a month and over 360,000 short ton of cargo. This is at the 5 deep draft piers.

Karl